

REMARKS

The present Amendment cancels claims 11-13 and adds new claims 14 and 15. Therefore, the present application has pending claims 14 and 15.

The Examiner's cooperation is respectfully requested to contact Applicant's Attorney by telephone to discuss the outstanding issues of the present application prior to examination.

Claim 11 stands objected to due to the informalities noted by the Examiner in paragraph 1 of the Office Action. As indicated above claims 11-13 were canceled. Therefore this objection is rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw this objection.

Claims 11-13 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly describe the subject matter of the invention. As indicated above claims 11-13 were canceled. Therefore this rejection is rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claims 12 and 13 stand rejected under 35 USC §101 being that the Examiner alleges that the claims are directed to non-statutory subject matter. As indicated above claims 11-13 were canceled. Therefore this rejection is rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Simske (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0064447); and claims 12 and 13 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Simske in view of Harrison (U.S. Patent Application

Publication No. 2003/0069880). As indicated above claims 11-13 were canceled. Therefore these rejections are rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw these rejections.

It should be noted that the cancellation of claims 11-13 was not intended nor should it be considered as an agreement on Applicants' part that the features recited in claims 11-13 are taught or suggested by Simske or Harrison whether taken individually or in combination with other. The cancellation of claims 11-13 was simply intended to expedite prosecution of the present application. Applicants hereby reserve their right to pursue the invention as set forth in claims 11-13 in a continuing application.

The present amendment adds new claims 14 and 15 which more clearly describe that the present invention is directed to an information searching method not taught or suggested by any of the references of record.

In the present invention, one of the purposes thereof is to effectively perform search operations for documents in accordance with similarities among said documents, wherein the search operations are conducted under any number of restricting conditions, such as that described in the passage of the present application on page 3, lines 21-26. For this purpose, a system according to the present invention includes functions for searching similarities with a so-called vector space method, and for calculating similarities only for documents satisfying the restricting conditions, or for first calculating similarities and subsequently performing judgment regarding the restricting conditions. These features of the present invention are described, for example, on page 35 lines 7-27, and for example, between page 38, line 18

and page 40, line 4 of the present application.

Thus, according to the present invention, it becomes possible to effectively perform the entire data processing due to omission of similarity calculations for documents deemed not to satisfy the restricting conditions.

The above described features of the present invention now more clearly recited in the claims are not taught or suggested by any of the references of record whether taken individually or in combination with each other. Particularly, the above described features of the present invention are not taught or suggested by Simske or Harrison whether taken individually or in combination with each other as suggested by the Examiner.

The purpose of the apparatus as taught by Simske is to reduce data searching errors by performing a search operation in accordance with synonymic queries. However, Simske merely discloses a system capable of performing a so-called Boolean searching operation. Thus, in Simske, it is possible to reduce searching error. Therefore, the teachings of Simske are entirely different from the features of the present invention as recited in the claims.

The teachings of Harrison are also entirely different from the features of the present invention as recited in the claims. Harrison does not seem to relate to a searching operation in accordance with similarities of documents or words as in the present invention as recited in the claims. Instead Harrison seems to relate to data processing used for a question/answer system such as Frequently Asked Questions.

Thus, both Simske and Harrison fail to teach or suggest inputting a search inquiry character train into a first block, forming a summary word list

including a plurality of words to be searched based on both the search inquiry character train inputted through the inputting step and data having been stored in advance in a database provided within a second block, and further inputting a restricting condition for narrowing down search targets for the plurality of words to be searched, the restricting condition being selected from a group including an existence of an indispensable word, and an existence of a taboo word as recited in the claims.

Further, both Simske and Harrison fail to teach or suggest storing a plurality of documents respectively having similarity with the summary word list formed at the forming step into a search result candidates holding module, judging whether or not the restricting condition is satisfied for each document of a plurality of documents respectively including at least one of the plurality of words having been searched within the further inputting step, and comparing a number of documents stored in the search result candidates holding module and a predetermined requested number if it is judged that the restriction condition is satisfied;

Still further, both Simske and Harrison fail to teach or suggest in case that a number of documents in the search result candidates holding module number is determined to be smaller than the predetermined requested number N through a comparison at the comparing step, adding the document to the search result candidates holding module, otherwise, calculating similarity score for the document, and comparing a similarity score with the smallest similarity of documents among the documents in the search result candidates holding module, in case the similarity score is larger than the smallest similarity, adding the document to the search result

candidates holding module, and outputting the documents added to the search result candidates holding module in a descending order of the similarity score as the search results as recited in the claims.

Therefore, both Simske and Harrison fail to teach or suggest the features of the present invention as now more clearly recited in the claims and as such combining Simske and Harrison in the manner suggested by the Examiner in the Office Action does not render obvious the claimed invention.


The remaining references of record have been studied. Applicants submit that they do not supply any of the deficiencies noted above with respect to the references utilized in the rejection of claims 11-13.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants submit that claims 14 and 15 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of claims 14 and 15 is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of MATTINGLY, STANGER, MALUR & BRUNDIDGE, P.C., Deposit Account No. 50-1417 (ASA-1169).

Respectfully submitted,

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